

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 13500 111151Z
ACTION EA-12

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O 111110Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4372

UNCLAS BANGKOK 13500

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: EMBASSY STATEMENT

REF: BANGKOK 13483

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF EMBASSY STATEMENT ISSUED IN RESPONSE TO
THAI JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATIONS' LETTER OF PROTEST TO VICE PRE-
SIDENT MONDALE. TEXT WAS DELIVERED TO SENDERS' OFFICES, AND
RELEASED TO LOCAL PRESS, VOA, AND MAJOR WIRE SERVICES THURSDAY
AFTERNOON (LOCAL TIME) AND WILL BE DELIVERED TO FOREIGN MINISTRY,
WHICH WAS CLOSED THURSDAY, EARLY ON FRIDAY:

BEGIN TEXT - THE THAI JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATIONS' LETTER TO VICE
PRESIDENT MONDALE HAS BEEN RECEIVED AND FORWARDED.

AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF THE POINTS RAISED IN THE
LETTER AND OTHER ALLEGATIONS REGARDING TREATMENT OF THE THAI
PRESS DURING THE VISIT OF VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, THE EMBASSY
WISHES TO MAKE KNOWN THE FOLLOWING FACTS:

1. DURING ALL THE PRE-ARRIVAL PLANNING BETWEEN THAI AND AMERICAN
OFFICIALS, THE PRIME CONSIDERATION AMONG ALL CONCERNED WAS
THOROUGH COVERAGE OF THE VISIT, AFFORDING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO
BOTH THAI AND AMERICAN JOURNALISTS.

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2. ALL EVENTS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT
TO THE ROYAL PALACE, WERE OPEN TO ANY JOURNALIST WHO DISPLAYED
THE PINK IDENTIFICATION CARD ISSUED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY,
IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE MINISTRY ITSELF.
THE EMBASSY KNOWS OF NO ONE WEARING SUCH IDENTIFICATION WHO WAS
EXCLUDED FROM ANY SITE, WITH THE AFOREMENTIONED EXCEPTION OF

THE PALACE.

3. FOR THE VISIT TO DIN DAENG REFUGEE TRANSIT CENTER, THE THAI AND AMERICAN SIDES AGREED, SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE THE VISIT, THAT THE EXTREMELY CROWDED CONDITIONS ON THE THIRD FLOOR MADE IT NECESSARY, AS A SAFETY PRECAUTION, TO LIMIT THE NUMBER OF ACCOMPANYING JOURNALISTS ON THAT FLOOR TO ONLY 30. IT WAS AGREED THAT THERE WOULD BE 15 THAI AND 15 AMERICAN JOURNALISTS, WITH SELECTION OF THE THAI JOURNALISTS BEING MADE BY THE THAI SIDE AND SELECTION OF THE AMERICANS BY THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, NO ONE WHO DISPLAYED THE PINK IDENTIFICATION CARD WAS EXCLUDED FROM THE DIN DAENG COURTYARD AND BUILDINGS, ALTHOUGH ONLY THE 30 JOURNALISTS DESIGNATED BY THE THAI AND US SIDES AND WEARING WHITE BADGES PROCEEDED TO THE THIRD FLOOR. THE AMERICAN SIDE WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SELECTION OF THE THAI JOURNALISTS WHO PROCEEDED TO THE THIRD FLOOR.

4. FOR MR. MONDALE'S PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE ERAWAN HOTEL, BODY SEARCHES WERE NEITHER REQUESTED NOR EXPECTED BY THE AMERICAN SIDE. WHEN IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT BODY SEARCHES WERE BEING CONDUCTED, AMERICAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE, ASKED THAT THEY BE DISPENSED WITH. WHEN IT WAS LEARNED THAT SOME THAI JOURNALISTS WERE BOYCOTTING THE PRESS CONFERENCE, VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE AGREED TO MEET WITH THEM AFTER HIS SCHEDULED CONFERENCE WAS OVER. WHEN HE WENT OUT TO MEET THEM, THEY HAD LEFT THE HOTEL.

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5. THOSE WHO WITNESSED THE EVENTS AT DIN DAENG AND MR. MONDALE'S MINGLING WITH WELCOMING CROWDS AFTER HE LEFT THE CENTER WILL ATTEST TO THE FACT THAT MANY THAI CITIZENS MET MR. MONDALE AT CLOSE QUARTERS WITHOUT ANY HINDRANCE BY SECURITY OFFICIALS.

IN ADDITION, THERE WERE OTHER ALLEGATIONS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE EMBASSY PROTESTED EARLY RELEASE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE, AND THAT THE VICE PRESIDENT FAILED TO TOAST HIS MAJESTY THE KING AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S DINNER. REGARDING THE FIRST, THE EMBASSY MADE NO FORMAL PROTEST, BUT SIMPLY POINTED OUT THAT PREMATURE RELEASE OF THE SCHEDULE BEFORE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE COULD LEAD TO CONFUSION. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT MANY OF THE DETAILS AS INITIALLY PUBLISHED IN THE PRESS WERE SUBSEQUENTLY CHANGED. IN ANY EVENT, PRIOR RELEASE OF THE SCHEDULE WAS NOT A SECURITY PROBLEM, BUT INVOLVED ONLY THE RELEASE OF THE PRELIMINARY AND TENTATIVE SCHEDULE WHICH SUBSEQUENTLY HAD TO BE CORRECTED. REGARDING THE SECOND, THE VICE PRESIDENT DID INDEED TOAST HIS MAJESTY, AND A TEXT OF THE TOAST AND HIS FULL REMARKS WAS RELEASED THE SAME EVENING.

IN PLANNING FOR THIS VISIT, EVERY REASONABLE EFFORT WAS MADE

TO ACCOMMODATE BOTH THE THAI PRESS AND THE AMERICAN PRESS AND
TO ENSURE THAT THAI JOURNALISTS HAD FAIR AND EQUAL ACCESS.
WE REGRET THAT ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS AROSE AND HOPE THEY WILL
NOT BE ALLOWED TO TARNISH THE LONG-STANDING BONDS OF MUTUA 1
RESPECT AND FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES.
END TEXT.
WHITEHOUSE

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